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Wells's style. It is manly, but not very vigorous; natural, but not very graceful; easy to read, but deficient in graphic power and narrative movement. Its chief merit is the absence of all affectation, and a certain prepossessing tone of earnestness, which springs evidently from the warmth of the writer's convictions. His work belongs, in short, to that class — far too small a one — of careful, candid, calm, and exhaustive biographies, in which the writer loves and reveres his hero too much to put himself irreverently in his hero's place. It would be an injustice to the publishers not to mention the excellent typographical execution of these volumes, and to the author not to thank him for the admirable chronological summary which he has prefixed to each.

14. — *Across the Continent: a Summer's Journey to the Rocky Mountains, the Mormons, and the Pacific States, with Speaker Colfax.* By SAMUEL BOWLES, Editor of the Springfield (Mass.) Republican. Springfield, Mass.: Samuel Bowles & Co. 1865.

THIS volume is the record of a journey, in the summer of 1865, through the States and Territories of Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, Dacotah, Utah, Nevada, California, Oregon, and Washington. The party consisted of Mr. Colfax, Speaker of the national House of Representatives, and three friends connected with different public journals; — Mr. Bross of the Chicago Tribune; Mr. Richardson, correspondent of the New York Tribune; and Mr. Samuel Bowles of the Springfield Republican. The design of the trip was simply for recreation, health, and observation; but as it proceeded it grew to dimensions of public significance. The people who inhabit the regions visited are hospitable by habit; and they were not slow to appreciate also the advantage to themselves of the report which would be made by these gentlemen. Accordingly the trip soon became *quasi* public in its character, and the travellers were everywhere received as public guests. The demonstrations in favor of Mr. Colfax, in particular, amounted to a long-continued ovation. It was a matter of course that the gentlemen of the press should send back letters to their respective journals. Those of Mr. Bowles were widely copied, both at the East and in the Pacific States; and in the volume before us we have them collected together, pruned of some minor details, and with the addition, by way of supplement, of extracts from speeches made by Mr. Colfax upon the route, and some papers from different persons upon subjects treated of in the letters.

In point of style, these letters have the freshness and freedom which

are natural, considering the circumstances under which they were written. They were addressed to a circle of friendly readers, and with almost the familiarity and directness of private correspondence. There is, throughout the volume, a personality of tone and manner, which, alike in the descriptions of scenery and society and in the discussion of grave social and material questions of public and even of national interest, produces a fresh and agreeable impression.

Perhaps the most important portion of the volume is that which is devoted to the Mormons. This is the best and most effective exposition of Mormonism that has been given. It is so because it is fair and candid. It is the truth that kills. These simple statements, containing not one word written in ill-nature or malice, and in many respects giving more generous commendation than they have heretofore received, have awakened the dire resentment of the Mormons. This travelling party had unsurpassed opportunities for observation. Before reaching Great Salt Lake City the municipal hospitalities were tendered to them by the Mormon authorities. The gentile portion of the population also, and the soldiers stationed at Camp Douglas, which overlooks the city, were eager that so distinguished a guest as Mr. Colfax should receive the first welcome from them. Some embarrassment was likely to arise from this rivalry, until Mr. Colfax excused himself temporarily to the Mormon dignitaries by saying, that, as he occupied an official position towards the government, he felt it to be his first duty to salute the national flag and pay a passing tribute of respect to the soldiers of his country, after which he would place himself under the care of the city. Another question of etiquette arose, — whether Brigham Young should first call upon Mr. Colfax, or Mr. Colfax upon Mr. Young; but Mr. Colfax gave out that he should wait to receive the visit, and Mr. Young, for the first time in this particular, yielded. Afterwards, when the parties met, there was the fullest and freest talk upon matters peculiar to Mormonism that has ever been held between the Mormon leaders and the gentile world. Last summer the former were professing great patriotism and a strong desire to have amicable relations with the national government. They were curious to know on what terms such a result could be accomplished. They were oppressively friendly in their tone and manner, and showered attentions upon their Eastern visitors. Now they show signs again of natural disloyalty, and another conflict between them and the government seems possible.

Mr. Bowles does full justice to the thrift, energy, industry, and various material worth of the Mormons. Indeed, to some readers his emphatic encomiums of them in these respects will be new, if not strange; and we ourselves cannot but recall how much of the work of reclaiming

the desert, building the city, erecting houses and fences, and digging ditches was extorted from the poor emigrants, who, exhausted and destitute of supplies, upon reaching that place in the earlier days, were forced to work for weary weeks and months for a mere pittance, until they could pursue their journey; and we wonder how much of the brilliant material success which the Mormons have achieved may be due to these and similar circumstances. But the essential fact that they have this material prosperity, that they have elements of strength and power and importance and value even to our government and country, it is not wise to deny or overlook. Great Salt Lake City is, and is likely to be, by reason of its position, progress, and wealth, the central point, the great inland city between the Mississippi and the Pacific. The only requirements which, under the theory of our free institutions, it is right or desirable to exact from the Mormons were stated to them by Mr. Colfax; namely, allegiance to the Constitution, devotion to the Union, and obedience to the laws. The true relation of polygamy to their religious system is clearly shown in this volume. It came by revelation. The doctrine is not contained in the Book of Mormon; and the practice may hereafter be dispensed with through the same agency by which it has thus far been sanctioned. But at any rate, if this change is not made by the church, it will be by the course of events. The doom of polygamy is predicted by Mr. Bowles in decisive words.

“Ultimately, of course, before the influences of emigration, civilization, and our democratic habits, an organization so aristocratic and autocratic as the Mormon Church now is must modify its rule; it must compete with other sects, and take its chance with them. And its most aristocratic and uncivilized incident, or feature of plurality of wives, must fall first and completely before contact with the rest of the world,—marshalled with mails, daily papers, railroads, and telegraphs,—ciphering out the fact that the men and women of the world are about equally divided, and applying to the Mormon patriarchs the democratic principles of equal and exact justice. Nothing can save this feature of Mormonism but a new flight and a more complete isolation. A kingdom in the sea, entirely its own, could only perpetuate it; and thither, even, commerce and democracy would ultimately follow it. The click of the telegraph and the roll of the overland stages are its death-rattle now; the first whistle of the locomotive will sound its requiem, and the pickaxe of the miner will dig its grave.”

The “poor Indian” is disposed of more summarily. This party were fortunate in escaping perils and delays which others who followed them had to encounter. But the testimony of Mr. Bowles and of his companions, as well as of every other traveller over the Indian country, strips savage life of its romance, savage character of its few elements worthy of esteem, and leaves the red man simply as a disagreeable, dirty,

treacherous object, standing as an obstacle in the way of civilization and progress and safety, — difficult to be reclaimed, and in his native state impossible to be endured.

We are also indebted to this volume for much that is new and useful on the subject of mining. The development of the mines of our country now attracts in a large degree the attention of statesmen, capitalists, and speculators; and the amount of popular ignorance respecting them is extraordinary. There are, for instance, many persons, intelligent on other subjects and not without practical skill in mining, who think that at some time a great seething mass of molten quartz and precious metals was forced up through crevices in the rocks, and that thus the true fissure veins of gold and silver bearing quartz were formed. Accordingly it has been extensively believed, and is constantly asserted by those having mines to sell, that the deeper the veins are worked, the richer they will become. The valuable paper of Mr. Ashburner, given in the supplement, dispels this illusion. It also contains the fullest and best account that has yet appeared of the famous Comstock ledge, over which Virginia City in Nevada is built, and of the various companies that are organized upon it. And in the body of the volume, the general aspects of mining in Nevada and California are discussed with a discrimination of judgment and an accumulation of facts that cannot fail to be of value to all who are interested in mining operations, either there or elsewhere.

One letter is devoted to the Pacific Railroad, which is characterized as "the great theme." The opening sentences contain the germ of nearly all that needs to be said upon this subject.

"To feel the importance of the Pacific Railroad, to measure the urgency of its early completion, to become impatient with government and contractor at every delay in the work, you must come across the plains and the mountains to the Pacific coast. Then you will see half a continent waiting for its vivifying influences. You will witness a boundless agriculture, fickle and hesitating for lack of the regular markets this would give. You will find mineral wealth immeasurable locked up, wastefully worked, or gambled away, until this shall open to it abundant labor, cheap capital, wood, water, science, ready oversight, steadiness of production, — everything that shall make mining a certainty and not a chance. You will find the world's commerce with India and China eagerly awaiting its opportunities. You will see an illimitable field for manufactures unimproved for want of its stimulus and its advantages. You will feel hearts breaking, see morals struggling slowly upward against odds, know that religion languishes; feel, see, and know that all the sweetest and finest influences and elements of society and Christian civilization hunger and suffer for the lack of this quick contact with the parent and fountain of all our national life."

To some readers, the portions of the volume to which we have not specially referred will be of yet more interest. The ride across the continent will hereafter take its place amongst the recognized pleasure-trips. The element of danger from Indians being removed, the route shortened by the progress of the railroad at each end, the inconveniences of travelling by stage somewhat mitigated, and the tourist, armed with pistol and rifle, and with leisure to tarry at points on the way, and to diverge occasionally from the accustomed route, will find in it a delight not easy to be expressed. The long stretches across the plains; the majestic scenery of the Rocky Mountains near Denver; the glitter of the far-off snow-peaks, not distinguishable from white clouds; the Church Butte, grand and imposing, but described by Mr. Bowles with a degree of architectural detail hardly warranted by the recollection of a less close observer; the attraction of the beautiful city of the desert, and its mountain views; the unequalled approach to that city, through its gateway of rock, for eight miles down the cañon; the long drives across the wilderness, wearisome as drives but not disagreeable as memories; the sluggish streams, creeping northward through the valleys in the hopeless endeavor to break through the barriers before them, till finally, as if in despair, they sink in broad meadows of alkali; the silver mines of Austin, of unequalled richness, seaming the hills like the ridges of furrows in a ploughed field; cities, creations of a year; the Sierra Nevada, whose inexhaustible forests awaken an emotion akin to rapture in one long deprived of the sight of large trees; the silver lakes high up among the mountains, so smooth and clear that in photographs of the mountains, with their reflection in the water, the eye cannot distinguish which is the mountain and which the reflection; the grand river scenery of the Columbia, almost unknown to us of the East till now; Shasta, Ranier, and Hood, monarchs among mountains; Puget's Sound, more lovely even than the island of Mount Desert; California, with its conglomeration of all races under the sun, foremost among whom, in all good enterprises, are the natives of New England, — its lavish hospitality, its mines, its agriculture, its fruits, its geysers, its big trees, its marvel of marvels, the Yo Semite Valley; — all these things, and more, are so vividly described in the volume before us as to render the reading of it attractive to one who has never made the journey, and to awaken the most delightful memories in those who have enjoyed that great pleasure.